

Message Text

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SUBJECT: REINSTITUTION OF VIETNAMESE AS INCENTIVE LANGUAGE

1. RECENT PUBLICATIONS NO LONGER LIST VIETNAMESE AS AN INCENTIVE LANGUAGE. UNDERSTAND THIS DECISION BASED ON THE COMPUTER SHOWING 25 PER CENT OF FS PERSONNEL WITH LANGUAGE TRAINING IN VIETNAMESE. WE FEEL THE INCENTIVE CUT-OFF IGNORES OUR SERIOUS PERSONNEL STAFFING PROBLEM. THE EMBASSY AND THE CONSULATES GENERAL HAVE NOW, AND HAVE HAD, STAFFING VACANCIES FOR PROTRACTED PERIODS, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE RELUCTANCE OF JUNIOR OFFICERS TO ENTER THE VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE TRAINING PIPELINE. ELIMINATING THE LANGUAGE INCENTIVE WILL ADD TO THE SCARCITY OF CANDIDATES. FURTHER, THERE IS NO HEADLONG RUSH FOR VIETNAM ASSIGNMENTS. A LARGE INPUT INTO THAT STATISTICAL 25 PER CENT CONSISTS OF OFFICERS WHO, HAVING ALREADY SERVED TWO TOURS IN THE COUNTRY, QUITE REASONABLY PREFER TO MOVE ON TO OTHER AREAS. AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT, DRAWING FROM THE RANKS OF THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED HERE BEFORE IS AN ACCEPTABLE SOURCE FOR THE MORE SENIOR OFFICERS BUT IS UNWORKABLE FOR MORE JUNIOR OFFICER SLOTS. RE-CYCLING THE SAME OFFICERS THROUGH THE MISSION AND THE CONSTITUENT POSTS IS A STRAIN ON THEIR CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS. THE NEW BLOOD WE NEED MUST COME FROM AN EXPANDED LANGUAGE PROGRAM.

2. DESPITE PER'S ASSIGNMENT PLANNING, OUR CURRENT STAFFING PROFILE ILLUSTRATES THE DIFFICULTY IN IDENTIFYING SUITABLE LANGUAGE REPLACEMENTS:

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SAIGON:

(A) A JANUARY VACANCY IN THE SECOND JOB IN INTERNAL POLITICAL, VICE WRIGHT, A VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE DESIGNATED POSITION;

(B) O/A MARCH OF 1974, CHARLES CURRIER, WITH TESTED S/2-R-2, SCHEDULED FOR REASSIGNMENT FROM POSITION 133 TO A CONSULATE GENERAL. WHILE CAN THO VICE MOSHER PROBABLY BEST CHOICE, DILEMMA ARISES FROM INTERNAL UNIT LOSING THE BENEFITS OF A LANGUAGE OFFICER SINCE MOSHER NOT A VIETNAMESE-SPEAKING OFFICER;

(C) NEW OFFICERS IN INTERNAL POLITICAL, AT THE INTERMEDIATE AND JUNIOR LEVEL, HAVE NOT HAD LANGUAGE TRAINING THUS LESSENING GVN CONTACTS, INTERPRETATION SKILLS, AND ABILITY TO CHECK TRANSLATIONS WHICH PLACES UNACCEPTABLE BURDEN ON THE REMAINING TWO LANGUAGE QUALIFIED OFFICERS IN POLITICAL SECTION.

CONSULATES:

(A) DA NANG. DEPARTMENT, AT THE EMBASSY'S SUGGESTION, REASSIGNED A VIETNAMESE-SPEAKING OFFICER TO BIEN HOA WHO HAD A CRITICAL NEED FOR AT LEAST ONE VIETNAMESE OFFICER. DA NANG, WHILE GENEROUSLY ACKNOWLEDGING THE URGENCY OF BIEN HOA'S SITUATION, WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A VIETNAMESE-SPEAKING OFFICER;

(B) CAN THO. VACANT POSITION 006, O-3 POLITICAL OFFICER, FORMERLY OCCUPIED BY LACY WRIGHT, WHO HAS FLUENT VIETNAMESE. AGAIN, IF THE CHOICE AVAILABLE, THE CG WOULD HAVE OPTED FOR AN S-2, R-2 REPLACEMENT. HOWEVER, REQUIREMENT DROPPED TO FACILITATE AN EARLIER ETA OF A REPLACEMENT. WE ARE NOW WAITING FOR IDENTIFICATION AND ETA OF A CANDIDATE.

3. WHEN LANGUAGE-SPEAKING FS PERSONNEL NOT FORTHCOMING, USADI OFFICER FILLED NHA TRANG'S ECONOMIC SLOT AND USIS JUNIOR OFFICER SCHEDULED ARRIVE JANUARY FOR BIEN HOA'S O-5 POLITICAL POSITION. OBVIOUSLY THERE IS NOT A CONTINUUM OF ADEQUATELY TRAINED OFFICERS COMING OUT OF THE 25 PER CENT FIGURE.

4. IN SUM, NEED FOR CONTINUING FLOW OF QUALIFIED VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE OFFICERS IS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED AND WILL CONTINUE FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE. AS RESULT FAILURE TO FILL DESIGNATED LANGUAGE POSITIONS WITH LANGUAGE OFFICERS OUR NEED IS NOW CRITICAL. WE STRONGLY URGE THAT DEPARTMENT IN ADDITION TO OTHER MEASURES TO MEET SITUATION REINSTITUTE VIETNAMESE AS INCENTIVE LANGUAGE AND GIVE DECISION FULL PUBLICITY WITHIN THE SERVICE.

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